



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

JUN 10 2022

From: Secretary of the Navy  
To: Colonel Christopher J. Bronzi, USMC

Subj: LETTER OF CENSURE

Ref: (a) (b) (6) ltr 5830 of 8 Jan 2021  
(b) COMMARCENT ltr 5800 CDR of 19 May 21  
(c) JAGINST 5800.7G (JAGMAN) 0114a

1. On 30 July 2020, an assault amphibious vehicle (AAV) assigned to the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) sank in the Pacific Ocean while conducting shore-to-ship movement, resulting in the death of eight Marines and one Sailor. Reference (a) examined the events leading to this tragic incident at the tactical level, while reference (b) focused on the forming and compositing of the 15th MEU, its training and material readiness, I Marine Expeditionary Force oversight, and COVID-19 pandemic impacts.
2. As the Commanding Officer, you were responsible for ensuring 15th MEU personnel were properly trained and its equipment operationally sound. The investigations determined you knew or should have known required pre-deployment waterborne training was not completed and the AAVs assigned to the 15th MEU were in a degraded state of readiness. Furthermore, the investigations revealed critical safety measures were not implemented during the mishap, in violation of applicable directives. Accountability for these failures rests with you.
3. The Marine Corps requires its leaders to accomplish the mission even in seemingly unsurmountable situations. You are censured for failing to identify and mitigate the training and material readiness failures that resulted in this mishap.
4. A copy of this letter will be placed in your official service record per reference (c). You may forward within 15 days of receipt of this letter a rebuttal consistent with reference (c), for inclusion in your official record, if you so desire.

Carlos Del Toro